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THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST
ELIMINATION OF RACISM AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-third year

Letter dated 19 November 1998 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Wye River Memorandum between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) contains specific commitments by the parties to halt incitement to violence (article II, para. 3). Moreover, implicit in the process of peacemaking is the creation of an environment of tolerance and the renunciation of all forms of racism between peoples (Oslo II Interim Agreement, article XXII).

Yet these fundamental principles have been seriously violated by the PLO leadership of the Palestinian Authority in recent weeks. On 15 November 1998 Chairman Yasser Arafat made the following statement in a Fatah conference in Ramallah:

> "Let 'the far' and 'the near' know that the Palestinian rifle is ready and we will aim it if they try to prevent us from praying in Jerusalem ... There are agreements and they better be carried out, because the 'generals of the stones' [i.e. the activists of the Intifada] are ready."

The clear-cut call to violence contained in these remarks contradicts the very foundations of the Oslo process begun in 1993. Furthermore, Arafat goes on to declare: "We chose the 'Peace of the Brave' out of faith in [the conduct of] the Prophet in the 'Hudaybiyeh Agreement.'" This reference to the "Hudaybiyeh Agreement", a temporary 10-year truce signed in 637 between the Prophet Muhammad and the Qureish tribe, only reinforces suspicions on the Israeli side that Mr. Arafat views Oslo as a ceasefire and not as a permanent reconciliation between peoples.

Additionally, since the Wye Memorandum the use of anti-Semitic motifs has not stopped in official Palestinian media. Thus an article by Naser Ahmad in Al-Hayat Al-Jadida, on 7 November 1998:

> "Corruption is a Jewish trait worldwide. So much so that one can seldom find corruption that was not masterminded by Jews or that Jews are not responsible for. They are well-known for their intense love of money and its accumulation ..."

The widespread use of anti-Semitism in Al-Hayat Al-Jadida has been noted in a previous letter, dated 9 January 1998, which was circulated as document A/52/762. This past year the publisher of Al-Hayat Al-Jadida, Mr. Nabil Amr, was promoted to become the Minister for Parliamentary Affairs in the Palestinian Authority. Previously he has served as the Fatah representative from Hebron to the Palestinian Legislative Council; he was also the PLO representative to Moscow. Moreover, the author of the article, Naser Ahmad, is employed by the Palestinian Authority's Political Guidance Directorate. In short, Al-Hayat Al-Jadida is not a peripheral or fringe publication that can be found in any society, but comes close to being an official organ of the Palestinian Authority.

This kind of language is totally unacceptable. In signing the Wye Agreement, Israel has made painful territorial concessions, with the knowledge that while Palestinian undertakings are less tangible (and reversible), nonetheless a sincere effort will now be made to create a new climate of peace.

Incitement to violence and racial hatred have no place in the Arab-Israeli peace process or in any other diplomatic processes worldwide. It is our sincere hope that statements of the sort cited here will no longer be enunciated, and the people of the Middle East can move towards an era of peace that they both need and deserve.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 40 and 108, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Ambassador Dore GOLD
Permanent Representative